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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 DECEMBER, 1947

WELLS:
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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WELLS

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1947.

WELLS, SOMERSET.
JUNE 20th, 1948.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1947.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area, 57,175 Acres.
Population as supplied by the Registrar General, 9,986.
Number of inhabited houses on the Rate Books, 2,694.
Rateable Value: £39,592.
Sum represented by a Penny Rate: £158.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

GEOLOGY—Dolomitic Conglomerate at Chewton Mendip and Westbury-sub-Mendip ; Mountain Limestone at Priddy ; Red Marl at Dinder, North Wootton and Rodney Stoke ; Red Marl and River Gravel at Wookey ; Lower Lias at West Pennard, Baltonsborough and Walton ; Alluvium and Peat at Glastonbury Moor, Meare and Godney.

OCCUPATION—Chiefly Agricultural ; Cheese and Cider Making ; Dairy Farming ; Paper Factories at Wookey and Wookey Hole ; Stone Quarrying in various parts of the District. Some of the people at Butleigh and Walton work at Shoe, Leather and Skin Factories at Street and Glastonbury. At Wookey Hole there is a factory manufacturing Electric Components, Fractional Motors and Television Equipment.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR.

BIRTHS :

	Total	M.	F.	
Legitimate	190	94	96	
Illegitimate	8	3	5	
	198	97	101	Birth Rate 19.83.

STILL BIRTHS: Total 5, Legitimate 5.
DEATHS: Total 147, Male 76, Female 71, Death Rate 14.72.
Number of Women dying in or in consequence of Childbirth : Nil.
Deaths of Infants under one year of age: Total 7, Legitimate 4, Illegitimate 3.

Death Rate of Infants: All Infants per 1,000 live births, 35.35.
Premature birth and debility accounted for, 2; Bronchitis, 4.
Deaths from Cancer, (all ages), 22.
Deaths from Measles (all ages), Nil.
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages), Nil.
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years), Nil.
Deaths from Pneumonia (all ages), 8
Deaths from Cerebro Spinal Fever (all ages), 1.
Deaths from Diphtheria (all ages), Nil.
Deaths from Influenza (all ages), 1.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Disease	Total Cases Notified	Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Measles	10	—	Nil.
Puerperal pyrexia	1	—	Nil.
Cerebro-spinal-meningitis ...	1	—	1
Pneumonia	3	—	8
Whooping Cough	11	—	Nil.
Erysipelas	1	—	—
Enteric Fever	1	—	Nil.
Dysentery	4	—	Nil.
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	—	Nil.
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	1	Nil.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during the year.

	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
Age Periods.	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0—5				1				
15—20				1			1	
25—30	2							
30—35	1			1				
35—40						1		
40—45	1	1						
45—50		1						
50—55	2							
60—65					1			1

Public Officers of the District :

Medical Officer of Health (part time) : Dr. T. R. G. Melrose, F.R.C.S. (Ed.).

Sanitary Inspector (whole time) : Stanley Merton Payne, Cert. S.I.B., M.S.I.A., Diploma of the Institute of Hygiene ; R.S.I. Certificate as Inspector of Meat and other Foods ; R.S.I. Certificate in Sanitary Science as applied to Buildings and Public Works.

Additional Sanitary Inspector (whole time) : S. Harkness, Cert., S.I.B., M.S.I.A., Certificate as Inspector of Meat and Other Foods.

Water Engineer and Surveyor (whole time): Ivor Roberts Morgan, B.Sc. (Hons.), A.M.I.M.E., A.M.I.C.E.

CAUSES OF SICKNESS. There were no special causes of sickness.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING. District Nurses under Local Associations and Health Visitors, appointed by the County Council ; the latter keep us informed as to the existence and removal of Tuberculosis Cases and other matters affecting the health of the district.

CLINICS. There is an Infant Welfare and Ante-Natal Centre in Wells, which is used by people residing in the Rural Area. School and Tuberculosis Clinics are provided by the County Council.

MIDWIVES. The lists are kept by the County Medical Officer of Health to whom they report all births, and any abnormal circumstances which might arise therefrom.

HOSPITALS. *Tuberculosis* : These are provided by the County Council. *Smallpox* : This is also provided by the County Council. *Maternity and Children* : Wells Cottage Hospital.

SCARLET FEVER, DIPHTHERIA, Etc. There is the Joint Isolation Hospital at Shepton Mallet. The Wells Rural District coming within the served area as the Council is a constituent authority of the Shepton Mallet Joint Isolation Committee, under an Order of the County Council dated January 5th, 1932, which became operative April 1st, 1932, and Hospital accommodation for the treatment of infectious disease, other than small-pox, is provided at Shepton Mallet.

No institution for un-married mothers, illegitimate children and homeless children exists in the District.

Ambulance facilities for the removal of infectious cases to the Isolation Hospital are provided. There is also an ambulance for the removal of cases to the Wells Cottage Hospital.

Attendance is made weekly by the County Tuberculosis Officer at Glastonbury and a considerable number of patients from the Rural Area attend here. The homes of notified cases are visited by the Sanitary Inspector and myself as well as by the County Health Visitors.

In the cases of Diptheria and Cerebro-Spinal-Meningitis use is made of the County Bacteriological Laboratory, and Anti-Toxin is supplied by the District Council, when applied for by the Medical men practising in the District.

DISINFECTION. After infectious disease this is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector with the use of spraying apparatus on the lines recommended by the County Medical Officer of Health. All disinfectants are supplied free by the Council.

LABORATORY WORK. The County Council have a laboratory at Taunton where samples are examined both bacteriologically and chemically and also for tubercule bacilli.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS. There have been no complaints and inspections during the year have revealed no bed bugs.

VENEREAL DISEASE. From the available evidence it would appear that the area is remarkably free from this disease.

SEWERAGE.

No works have been carried out during the year, but the Council have a scheme in outline, and the County Council have agreed to accord priority to the following Parishes : Draycott, Rodney Stoke, Westbury, Easton, Walton and Baltonsborough. A full time Engineer has been appointed to prepare the schemes in detail.

WATER SUPPLY.

The district is in urgent need of a good water supply. Development at present is very costly and slow owing to lack of water in most areas.

Some parishes have supplies, but these generally are either deficient in quantity or quality, sometimes both. The main Regional Scheme has been held up, mainly due to the lack of sufficient quantity of water from any one single source—a feature strongly desired by the Ministry of Health. Estimated water requirements show a tendency to rise and the longer any scheme is held up the more difficult it becomes to put into operation. The present policy of the Council is to use the Priddy source as a supply for the Northern Parishes of the district. The water is sufficient for this purpose. Mains will be put in large enough to allow for extensions in the area of supply as and when other water becomes available. This may be from the Axbridge Reservoir, or various sources at Rodney Stoke.

BALTONSBOROUGH.

Each inhabited house has a water supply laid on. The water is supplied in bulk from Shepton Mallet R.D.C. A reservoir of 25,000 gallons capacity is situate on Windmill Hill. Top water level O.D. + 190. The delivery of water in the summer months is very restricted and quite insufficient for the needs. Water is also brought to this village by a link main from West Pennard—this meets most of the deficiences in the lower lying parts of the village but during peak draw-off periods, pressure is bad—this is due to the low head (159 O.D.) and long length of link main.

BUTLEIGH.

About 42 of the 177 houses have a water supply laid on from the Estate Supply. About 30 rely on standpipes and the remainder on private wells. The Estate Supply is derived from surface springs and storage of 500,000 gallons or more is provided in a series of reservoirs. The quality of the water is usually good, but there have in the past been various occasions on which pollution has occurred. Sampling of individual springs was carried out some few years ago and the water from the bad springs was cut off. No pollution has been found since that time. The supply as it exists is far from sufficient for the needs, and during dry periods great conservation has to be practised. Serious shortages were experienced during the summer.

CHEWTON MENDIP.

Approximately 90 out of 173 properties are supplied from the Estate Supply or from Shepton Mallet. Of the remainder 44 have supplies available within 100 yards. The other properties are generally outlying and have to rely on wells or rainwater tanks. The Estate Supply is derived from surface springs and a borehole. The water pressure at certain points, such as Nedge Hill and West End is inadequate and during periods of economy these places are the first to suffer. Reservoir capacity is only on a very small scale and the supply generally appears to require further development.

OUT ST. CUTHBERT.

East and West Horrington.

A spring supply piped to a 10,000 gallon reservoir at 656 O.D. provides water for these two villages. The water is of good quality and all needs have been met up to the present. Some 59 out of 116 houses have a piped supply and the remainder have standpipes available within reasonable distance.

Coxley.

There are some 170 houses, rather scattered in this village. A few have private water supplies laid on. Some have their own wells, but a very large number have to haul water from a spring known as " Little Well."

Burcott.

71 houses either without water or relying on their own wells.

Easton.

73 houses. Some have private piped supplies. There are two public wells which provide good water for the bulk of the population. Most of the private wells are polluted and out of use.

Wookey Hole, Elm Close and Haybridge.

These groups of houses are supplied by Wells City who are the Statutory Water Undertakers. Most houses have piped supplies of good quality water in adequate supply.

Dulcote.

Some 43 houses of which 30 have a piped supply derived from a small private water system installed many years ago. There are no complaints of shortage and the cottages without piped supplies have water available within easy reach.

Chilcote, Worminster, Milton and Walcombe.

These small groups of houses have piped supplies from various sources. Their needs appear to have been met, and they do not form part of the Regional Scheme.

DINDER.

35 out of 57 houses have piped supplies from the Estate Supply. This water is derived from springs which rise near Masbury Ring. The remainder of the houses are not within reach of the mains and have to rely on wells, etc., for their water. The Estate Water is of good quality and appears to be sufficient for present requirements.

GODNEY.

47 out of 73 houses have piped supplies from the Street U.D.C. main which runs through the village. The supply is of good quality and there is no shortage at any time. The remainder of the houses have to rely on private supply as they are not in compact groups or within easy reach of the trunk main.

MEARE.

There are 269 houses in this parish and only in three or four instances are there good supplies of water from private boreholes. The remainder for the greater part are dependent on shallow wells usually polluted, or water from the river or water hauled from a spring situate some two or three miles from the centre of the village. Serious shortages were experienced during the summer.

NORTH WOOTTON.

64 out of 78 houses have piped water of good quality and unlimited quantity. The remainder of the houses are not within easy reach of the mains but in at least three of these cases they are likely to lay on water at an early date. The water is derived from two boreholes, each fitted with an electric pump. There is a reservoir of 30,000 gallons, capacity at 155 O.D. One electric pump is controlled by float switch and provides water for the Parish—the other pump is manually controlled and delivers water into the chlorinating plant of the Glastonbury Corporation which is within 100 yards of our plant. The water so delivered is taken back by this Council at West Pennard for use in that Parish.

PRIDDY.

24 out of 70 houses now have a piped supply from an agricultural system installed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners also a number of farmhouses. The District Council are purchasing

water in bulk at some of the remote parts of the village, and are distributing to the nearby cottages. The water is of good quality.

A very large part of the population still have to haul water from the Council's supply at Priddy Green. This water also is of excellent quality and of such sufficiency that it forms the major source of the Council's Regional Water Supply Scheme. Some further development has been done in this area during the year with the object of finding sufficient additional water to meet the requirements of the Regional Scheme.

RODNEY STOKE.

21 out of 210 houses in this Parish have piped water from the Street U.D.C. Main. Street Council under their Water Act have to supply as much of this Parish as can be supplied by gravity. The remainder of the Parish have to depend on private wells, a spring at Rodney Stoke or a Public Pump at Draycott. The position generally is far from satisfactory.

SHARPHAM.

8 houses out of 24 have piped supplies. The remainder are not within easy reach of the main and have to haul water from one of two standpipes which have been provided. The source of the water is the Street U.D.C. main. Wells R.D.C. purchase in bulk. Quality and quantity satisfactory.

WALTON.

There are 135 houses, 28 of which have piped supplies. The remainder have to rely on shallow wells, and one main standpipe. Many of the wells are polluted. The remainder of this village will have main water during 1948.

WESTBURY.

37 out of 167 houses have piped supplies—these are of a private nature and mainly from an agricultural scheme installed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners some years ago. The remainder of the houses rely on private wells or the three public wells.

WEST PENNARD.

174 out of 193 houses have piped supplies. The remainder have either a standpipe within easy reach or have private supplies. There is a 30,000 gallon reservoir at Sticklynch, and water is purchased in bulk from the Glastonbury Corporation. When shortages were encountered it became necessary to provide Glastonbury Corporation with water at North Wootton (see note above) and during the dry season it is now possible to pump into the main at North Wootton as much water as is required to be extracted at West Pennard. The arrangement is very satisfactory to both Councils.

WOOKEY.

202 houses, none of which have piped supplies. The villagers rely on their own wells, many of which are polluted. The position is far from satisfactory.

THE MENDIP HOSPITAL.

This large County Institution which houses well over 1,000 persons has its own water supply. The main source is two boreholes situate between Bristol Road and Watchet's Spring which provides the water for East and West Horrington. These boreholes are in the old red sandstone formation, and yield sufficient water for the very large demands of such an institution and the farms run in connection therewith. At the present time it is felt that the supply is approaching a point where, due to increased demands, it may be insufficient, and it may be that the Council will be approached with a view to supplementing the supply during times of need.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.

The following is a summary of the inspections made during the year :—

Infectious dwellings : Occupiers served with notice as to isolation of patients and disinfection	Nil.
Disinfectants supplied by the Council	21
Dwellings and clothing disinfected as directed by the Medical Officer of Health	4
Nuisances arising from foul and choked drains, foul accumulations, etc.	107
Samples of drinking water sent to the County Laboratory for analysis	29
Premises licensed under the Petroleum Acts for the storage of petrol	25
Premises licensed under the Petroleum Acts for the storage of carbide of calcium	3
Visits re water supplies	34
Bakehouses (6), Slaughterhouses (12), inspected ...	18
Public Schools inspected	12
Visits to dairies and cowsheds	591
Visits re food inspection	38
Housing survey inspections	392
Other inspections under Housing Acts	186
Visits re rats	22
Visits re sewage disposal schemes	18
Visits re refuse collection	48

REFUSE COLLECTION.

Refuse and salvage are each collected monthly, separate collections being made.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

1.—**INSPECTIONS** for purpose of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	40	63	2	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies				
(*a*) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement) Order, 1938†				
(*b*) Others	23	43	Nil	Nil
(iii) Other Premises under the Act‡ (excluding out-workers' premises)				
TOTAL	63	106	2	Nil

DEFECTS (i.e. want of Cleanliness) were found in 8 cases. These were remedied on informal action.

OUTWORKERS. There are 20 outworkers in the district (all glovemakers).

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

Under the Livestock (Restriction on Slaughtering) Order 1940, all the slaughterhouses in the Rural area became automatically closed on January 12th, 1940. With the exception of farmers' pigs (for their own consumption) and a few casualties no slaughtering has taken place at any of the slaughterhouses. Regular inspection has therefore to a great extent been unnecessary. Only a small quantity of meat has been condemned during the year.

FOOD INSPECTION.

Inspection of food at shops and stores is carried out regularly and small quantities have been condemned as found necessary.

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDERS.

On the 31st December, 1947, there were 424 persons' names on the Register of Producers of Milk.

75 of the Producers have licences for the Tuberculin Tested Milk, and 77 of them have licences for Accredited Milk. All these licences are issued by the County Council.

The number of distributors on the Register was 118, divided as follows : Distributors only, 11 ; Distributors who are also producers, 107.

The greater quantity of the milk is sold to one or other of the Dairy Companies or sent to the large towns, but in the summer some cheese is made.

HOUSING.

During the year 21 new houses have been completed by the Council and 11 by private enterprise. A further 63 were under construction, 59 by the Council and 4 by private enterprise.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. R. G. MELROSE,
Medical Officer of Health.